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SHORT COMMUNICATION

Status of *Crocodylus palustris* in Similipal Tiger Reserve, Odisha, India

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ABSTRACT

Crocodylus palustris is a vulnerable species and widely distributed in India. It is also found in Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR), Odisha, India. The population inventory was carried out to know the status of the species in STR. The results revealed that total 77 individual were counted in STR. The present study highlights the good population in study area and brings attention towards making a sound conservation plan.

Crocodylus palustris is a common and widely distributed species in the country (Vyas 2011). It is ecto and heterothermic seasonal breeder, gonochoric, hole-nesting and oviparous species (Jacobson 1999). It is placed under Schedule I of Wild Life Protection Act, 1972 and categorized as a Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List. The Population of the species is declining in alarming rate in India in general and particular in Eastern Ghats. Keeping this in view, an attempt has been made to know the population status of *Crocodylus palustris* (Figure 2) in Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) of Eastern Ghats. STR is situated in the Mayurbhanj district of Odisha. It is the home of Royal Bengal

Tiger (RBT) and Asian Elephant along with diverse flora and other faunal species (Kumar et al 2017). The study was carried out during 2017 in the 8 forest ranges of study area. During the survey, direct sighting & indirect evidences were noted and analyzed to carry out the actual current population of *Crocodylus palustris* in STR. The body length was measured by ocular estimation. Results revealed that a total 77 mugger crocodile were counted (Table 1) in the different river systems of STR. It was observed that the maximum individual of *Crocodylus palustris* was noted in West Deo river (63) by Khairi (04), Khadkei (04), East Deo (03) and Budhabalnga (03) (Figure 1). It was noted

that size range of observed *Crocodylus palustris* were 1.5 m to 2.0 m (Table 1). The present study showed that STR is rich with *Crocodylus palustris*. Hence, more studies were needed on the species for making the conservation plan for Eastern Ghats.

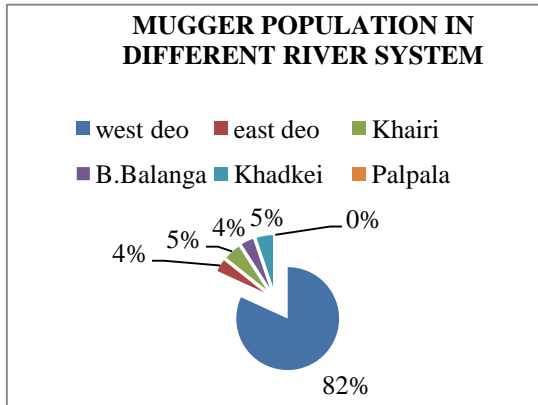


Figure 1: Richness of *Crocodylus palustris* in different river systems of STR



Figure 2: *Crocodylus palustris* in STR

Table 1: Year wise population of the species in STR

Year	Size wise				Evidence	Total
	<1m	1-1.5m	1.5-2m	>2m		
2010	04	37	22	6	09	78
2011	06	37	18	14	10	85
2012	06	19	08	10	39	82
2013	09	18	17	12	24	80
2014	09	16	25	08	21	79
2015	05	21	18	10	27	81
2016	04	14	20	13	28	79
2017	06	15	29	14	13	77

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